

B&S SLA Schools EVC Information Update, September 2016

IMPORTANT UPDATE REGARDING RISK BENEFIT ASSESSMENTS

In September 2013, Mansoor Elahi, a 31-year-old from Rochdale, was an inpatient at the Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust's Birch Hill Hospital. At the time of the incident, Mansoor was a member of a group of patients taking part in a rafted-canoe activity session contracted out to Hollingworth Lake Water Activity Centre - an AALA licenced centre.

While the trust was aware that Mansour had a history of attempting to take his own life, it did **NOT** have a personalised risk assessment with appropriate control measures in place to address this issue and did **NOT** make the activity centre aware of Mansoor's possible behaviour.

During the activity session, Mansour removed his buoyancy aid and made several attempts to throw himself into the water with the intention of committing suicide, but was restrained by the instructor. However, after hitting the instructor about the head, Mansour jumped into the water.

All efforts to affect a rescue from both the raft and the shore failed. When Mansoor was eventually pulled from the lake, he could not be revived.

At the end of July 2016, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust pleaded **guilty to breaches of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999 and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.** **Manchester Crown Court imposed a fine of £30k and ordered the Trust to pay costs of £51k.**

HSE Inspector Caroline Shorrocks said: ***"The Trust failed to adequately assess Mr Elahi's suitability to attend the rafted canoeing activity. Mr Elahi's actions were entirely foreseeable as he had tried to enter the lake on a previous occasion. Had the Trust carried out a suitable assessment they would not have allowed a vulnerable person the opportunity to end his life."***

The case has important implications for schools running off-site activities and visits that include "vulnerable" young people and is directly relevant to visits that might include young people who have self-harmed or threatened to take their own life.

EVCs should ensure that (notwithstanding the intention to be inclusive) the visit plan assesses the suitability of vulnerable young people to attend the specific activities

Ensure that any "vulnerable" pupils included in a visit have a recorded, personal risk-benefit assessment that includes control measures that address the issues as they could present during the visit.

Where necessary, this information must be shared with a Provider.

Bill Taylor & Stew Puttick, September 2016